

Suggestions for Planting and First Pruning of Fruit Trees

Adams County Nursery

The most important care you can give your tree in its first year is to provide it with enough water all season long.

After Receiving Your Fruit Trees

Keep roots moist and add water as needed. Soak from 4-6 hours before planting. If planting will be delayed, trees should be 'heeled in' by planting temporarily in loose soil as soon as possible.

Fruit Tree Placement

Fruit trees perform best in full sunlight. Specific fruit types that require cross-pollination should be planted within 50 feet of one another.

Preparation

Dig holes approximately 18 inches deep and 18 inches wide. Amend soil with lime and organic matter as needed. Break up hardpan layer if present, and break up 'glazing' in clay soils. Do not add raw fertilizers or manure to soil mixture.

Planting

Place tree in planting hole so that roots lay naturally, with the bud union 2 inches above soil level after planting (just above ground level for peach). Fill in soil in layers and tamp around the roots to insure good soil contact and remove air pockets. Immediately water trees to saturate the soil. After settling, insure that the bud union is still 2 inches above soil level and adjust as necessary. See pruning guide below.*

Water

When rainfall is not adequate, add water to newly transplanted trees at least once each week during the first growing season with 3-4 gallons of water per tree.

Fertilizer

Fertilizers containing nitrogen should be applied to newly transplanted fruit trees beginning 3-4 weeks after planting. If granular fertilizers are applied, use care to avoid contact with the tree trunk. A general recommendation is to use 4 oz. of 10-10-10 per tree in a circumference 2-3 feet from the base of the tree, allowing fertilizer to go down to the root tips.

Weed Control

Good weed control is very important in the immediate vicinity of transplanted trees to reduce competition. Do not cultivate the soil surface within the area of the planting hole. Composted mulches are useful for weed control and retaining soil moisture. Large hardwood chips are less likely to harbor damaging rodents. Crushed limestone or pea-sized gravel is the preferred material. A bushel of stone per tree, 2-3 inches in depth extending 3-4 feet around the base of the tree is adequate.

Protecting Your Fruit Trees

Tree guards are useful to prevent damage from mice, rabbits, and other wildlife. In areas of heavy deer pressure, your best option is fencing.

Follow Up Fruit Tree Care:

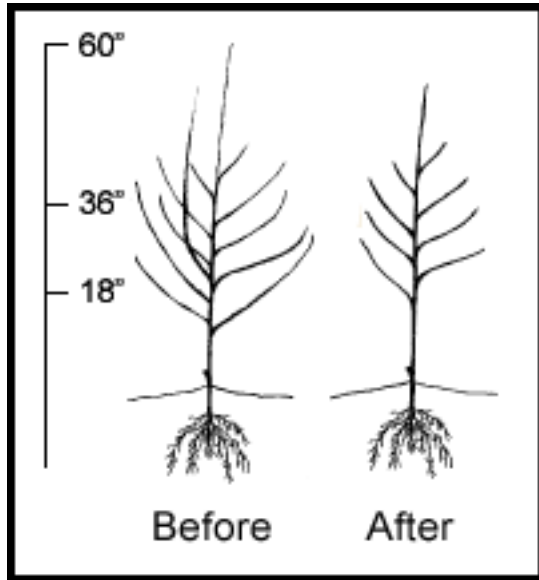
Further limb selection and pruning is necessary for proper tree structure in the years following planting.

For detailed information on fruit tree management consult your local Cooperative Extension Office, 832 – 0343.

*See the diagrams on other side for some basic pruning guidelines.

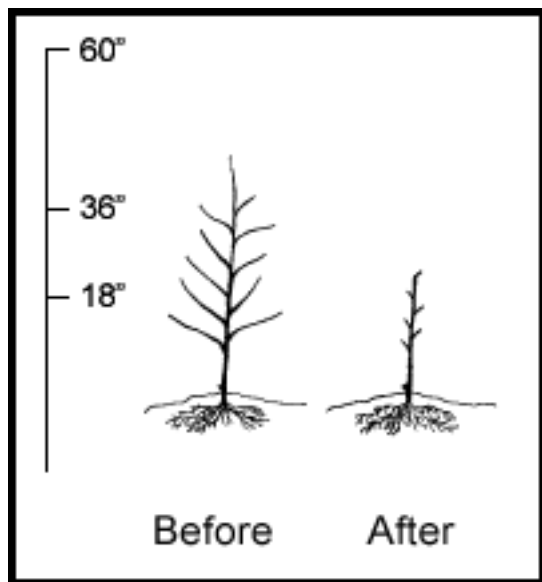
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Trees need a balanced amount of roots and leaves. Roots provide water; leaves make carbohydrates and they lose water in the process. The first year your tree is in the ground, its job is to re-establish a good root system and they need leaves to do this! However, many people recommend pruning your bare-root trees to reduce the amount of leaf area (and water loss) to balance the roots lost in digging your trees.



Apple and Pear Trees

- Plant the tree so that the bud union is 2 inches above ground level.
- If no branches are present cut back the tree to 32-34 inches.
- On a branched tree, remove scaffold branches below 18 inches and cut back the leader to 18 inches above upper most scaffold branch. Remove limbs with narrow crotch angles that grow parallel to the central leader and shorten scaffold branches to 12" long.



Peach and Nectarine Trees

- The bud union should be just above ground level.
- Cut back tree to approximately 30 inches. Cut side branches back to 3 or 4 buds.
- For a whip (unbranched tree), cut the tree back to 30 inches.

Tart Cherry Trees

- Plant so that bud union is just above ground level.
- Remove narrow angled branches and broken limbs. Cut side branches back to 3 or 4 buds.